

FILED

JUN 15 2005

T.S. McGREGOR, CLERK
U.S. BANKRUPTCY COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

In re:
THE CATHOLIC BISHOP OF SPOKANE
a/k/a THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
SPOKANE,
Debtor.

No. 04-08822-PCW11
Chapter 11

COMMITTEE OF TORT LIGITANTS,
Plaintiff,
vs.
THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
SPOKANE, et al.,
Defendants.

Adversary No. 05-80038-PCW

MEMORANDUM DECISION RE:
TORT CLAIMANTS' COMMITTEE'S
MOTION FOR RECONSIDERATION OF
DENIAL OF MOTION TO INTERVENE

15 On May 9, 2005, the Tort Claimants' Committee (hereinafter
16 "TCC") filed its timely Motion for Reconsideration (Docket No. 107) of
17 the denial of its initial Motion to Intervene in this adversary
18 proceeding. The initial ruling was an oral decision constituting
19 the findings of fact and conclusions of law with the order denying
20 the motion entered on April 29, 2005 (Docket No. 97). The current
21 motion seeks reconsideration, or more accurately, seeks substantive
22 review and revision of the previous decision.

23 This motion is brought pursuant to FRBP 9023, which
24 incorporates FRCP 59. That rule and the case law implementing it
25 establish four grounds for such motions: 1) A change in the
26 controlling law; 2) Newly discovered evidence; 3) Manifest error of
27 law or fact; and 4) Manifest injustice. The first three grounds
28 are inapplicable in this situation and are not argued by the moving

MEMORANDUM DECISION RE: . . . - 1

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1 party. At best, the basis for the motion is that manifest
2 injustice will result from the Court's prior decision because that
3 decision is wrong. All courts, including this Court, occasionally
4 reach incorrect conclusions. Such decisions should, and do, result
5 in appeals, but do not necessarily result in manifest injustice.
6 Indeed, the Ninth Circuit has referred to motions to reconsider as
7 an "extraordinary remedy." *McDowell v. Calderon*, 197 F.3d 1253 (9th
8 Cir. 1999).

9 The Motion for Reconsideration should be **DENIED** as the
10 requirements of FRBP 9023 do not exist. Although the Motion for
11 Reconsideration contains no legal or equitable arguments not
12 previously addressed in the oral decision, as a supplement to and
13 clarification of the previous oral ruling, each argument raised in
14 support of the motion will be addressed.

15 1. *The TCC should be allowed to intervene as it attempted to
16 resolve the issues of property of the estate without the expense
17 and delay of litigation.*

18 It is commendable that the TCC did so. Its efforts were not
19 wasted. The discussions between the TCC and the debtor prior to
20 the commencement of this adversary proceeding by the Tort
21 Litigants' Committee (hereinafter "TLC") will be relevant to any
22 discussion between the debtor and the TLC regarding resolution of
23 the property of the estate issues. It is in the debtor's interest
24 to use the knowledge gained from the prior discussions with the TCC
25 in order to anticipate and attempt to avoid any objection the TCC
26 might have to any settlement reached with the plaintiff TLC. Also,
27 the Court has made it clear that the counsel for the TCC should be
28 kept informed as to the progress of settlement discussions.

MEMORANDUM DECISION RE: . . . - 2

1 2. *The TLC does not adequately represent the interest of the*
2 *TCC in this adversary proceeding.*

3 This was fully discussed in the oral decision. Both
4 Committees have an identical interest in this adversary, i.e.,
5 maximizing the property of the estate. The TCC correctly argues
6 that the TLC has no interest in utilizing that property for the
7 payment of the claims of the constituents of the TCC. Payment of
8 claims will not be determined in this adversary proceeding but in
9 the context of a plan. Firstly, the property must be identified
10 and defined. Secondly, the parties will argue regarding the
11 division of that property. At that point, the interest of these
12 two committees will be diametrically opposed. For purposes of this
13 adversary proceeding their interests are identical.

14 3. *Absent intervention, the TCC is denied any meaningful*
15 *participation in the resolution of one of the primary issues of the*
16 *case.*

17 The 11 U.S.C. § 541 issue is one of the key issues of the
18 entire reorganization. Any consensual plan would have to address
19 the issue in some meaningful fashion even though a consensual plan
20 might represent a compromise on the parties' positions rather than
21 a final resolution of the issue. No consensual plan could be
22 developed without full participation of the TCC. Recently, the
23 parties tentatively agreed to a procedure to begin discussions
24 regarding a consensual plan. Assuming no consensual plan can be
25 submitted, the process required to confirm any plan proposed by the
26 debtor allows ample opportunity for all interested parties to
27 participate in the reorganization process. Denial of the Motion to
28 Intervene does not deprive the TCC of its opportunity to fully

MEMORANDUM DECISION RE: . . . - 3

1 participate in the reorganization process.

2 The denial of the request to intervene will deprive the TCC of
3 the opportunity to participate in what may well become a lengthy
4 appeal process of this Court's decision in the adversary
5 proceeding. However, the TCC will obtain the exact same benefit as
6 the TLC from the eventual resolution of the adversary proceeding,
7 i.e., identification of property of the estate.

8 4. *Denying intervention encourages a "race to the courthouse"*
9 *between the Committees.*

10 Unfortunately, that race has already begun and has
11 historically resulted in some needless and unseemly litigation of
12 relatively unimportant issues. The effect has been to reduce the
13 funds available to pay the constituents of both Committees, reduce
14 the funds available to the debtor to continue its operations, and
15 delay the reorganization process. Recent events indicate that this
16 needless race may have concluded. If not, the Court has more
17 effective remedies at its disposal than allowing intervention in
18 this adversary.

19 5. *Costs to the estate can be controlled without denying*
20 *intervention.*

21 Control of costs was only one factor utilized in reaching the
22 conclusion that intervention should be denied. The TCC is correct
23 that a denial of intervention is merely one device to assist in
24 reducing administrative costs and that the Court has other means to
25 monitor and control administrative costs. However, the increase in
26 administrative expenses which would result if intervention were
27 granted is properly a factor to be considered. As previously
28 indicated, there is an expectation of cooperation and out-of-court

MEMORANDUM DECISION RE: . . . - 4

1 communication between the Committees and among the Committees and
2 the debtor and the parish representatives not only to contain
3 costs, but to reduce the historical level of hostility which
4 unfortunately developed early in this case.

5 6. *The TLC owes a fiduciary duty to the constituents of the*
6 *TCC in this adversary.*

7 In the context of this adversary, the interests of the TLC and
8 the TCC and indeed all creditors of the estate, are aligned. Their
9 mutual goal is to maximize the property of the estate. Any
10 plaintiff in any adversary proceeding with such a goal is
11 litigating for the benefit of all creditors of the estate.

12 In summary, the Motion for Reconsideration is **DENIED** and the
13 Court's prior ruling denying the Motion to Intervene remains in
14 effect.

15 DATED this 15th day of June, 2005.

16
17 
18 PATRICIA C. WILLIAMS
19 Bankruptcy Judge